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Harold:

I tell you sincerely that I don't want to believe this. The only grounds that I have is that it is too good, far too good. I'm scared of it, though, because I do believe it. If Frazier fired those test cases empty, then everything is a cinch for us-- we can bust the whole mess from top to bottom. ~~xIfxx~~ There will be no way of getting around it with rheteric, except that they will say such a thing couldn't happen. But as I see things now (never mind what may cause me to change later), it did happen.

I thought at first that it was too stupid a thing for Frazier to do; he knows better than that. But I understand his motive now; I understand why he cannot have done anything else, why he cannot have used cartridges that fired bullets.

He had to produce exact duplicates of the evidence cases, things similar in every way. I think (I am not at all sure) that if he had fired fully loaded test cartridges, he would not have gotten ~~xxx~~ microscopic markings on the primers of the test cases that correspond with the marks on the primers of the evidence cases. The difference in pressure between cases that fire bullets and cases that do not is tremendous, and I think the difference would cause different kinds of microscopic marks on the primers. I can't be sure, for I don't know enough about microscopic examination.

Pull me back from this if you can, for I am ready to scrap the whole thing if I can find a flaw in any of it-- if anybody can show me the least flaw that might throw the whole machine out of whack. I have been so close to it, so eager to succeed, that I wonder whether I can trust my judgment.

i.e. the answer to the question, not whether Nichols has facilities. I am sending him a copy of this.

Nichols might have facilities for checking about the difference in primer marks, or access to such facilities. If you can find out, then please do. The question is this: When empty cases are fired, ~~do they show the same type of marks as appear on the firing~~ do their primers show the same marks (or type of marks) as appear on primers that were fired in fully loaded cartridges? This refers to microscopic marks made by the firing pin and bolt face.

Enclosed is a page describing Frazier's two test cartridge cases (CE 557). If you have seen them, please tell me whether the description is exact. If you have not seen them, then take this page with you the next time you go to the Archives and check my description carefully.

For the description I rely entirely on Thompson. He screwed up his whole explanation of ~~this~~ these cases, and I may rap him hard for it.

If I can get to Washington and see the cases, I will, but I can't say when.

I should be overjoyed; I feel dreadful. I did not expect things to turn out this good, and I wonder whether I havn't been deceiving you, deceiving myself.

~~I~~ I'll continue writing on the basis of what I think is true. You must try to prove me wrong, for the least slip-up is disaster.

Dick

BERNABEI

cc. Nichols

And two cartridge cases

In the course of his testimony before the Commission, Frazier introduced into evidence two cartridge cases that he had collected as tests for comparison with the three cases that were found near the window of the Depository. Here is his testimony regarding the collection of the two test cases (3 H 418):

> Question: I now hand you two cartridge cases, and ask you whether you can identify these cartridge cases?
> Frazier: Yes, sir; these are the two cartridge cases we (sic) fired for test purposes in (the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle).

The two test cases were introduced into evidence as CE 557; both cases bear the same exhibit number. The interview continues:

> Question: These were the only two cartridge cases fired as tests in (the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle)-- as tests for the purpose of identification of the cartridge cases which you examined before, 543, 544, and 545?
> Frazier: Yes, sir; these two were used in those tests. There were many other cartridge cases fired, but not for that purpose.

One of the two cartridge cases in CE 557 bears a dent on the shoulder of the cartridge case. The dent on the shoulder of this test case corresponds in every essential respect with the dents on the shoulders of CEs 544 and 545.

Like CEs 544 and 545, this test case was dented when it was thrust as a fully loaded cartridge from the clip in the rifle that Oswald ordered. Like CEs 544 and 545, the bullet was pulled and the powder was drained from this test case. Like CEs 544 and 545, the primer of the empty test case was fired in the rifle that Oswald ordered. If it had fired a bullet, it would not be dented.

The other of the two cases in CE 557 bears a mark in the same place, on the case shoulder. The mark on the shoulder of this test case is not as pronounced as the dents on the shoulders of the other cartridge cases, but it corresponds in every essential respect with the mark that occurs on the shoulder of CE 141, the unfired and fully loaded cartridge that was found chambered in the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle when it was found in the Depository building. The marks that appear on the shoulders of these two cases are not conspicuous dents, but are visible surfaces that verge on being dents.

Like CE 141, this test case was dented when it was thrust as a fully loaded cartridge from the clip in the rifle that Oswald ordered. Like CE 141, this test case never fired a bullet. The bullet was pulled from it, its powder was drained, and the primer of the empty test cases was fired in the rifle that Oswald ordered.